

University of Texas System Teacher Incentive Fund Program



The seven public school districts, the University of Texas (UT) System, and the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) have formed a partnership to implement the UT-TIF program. The schools serve primarily low socioeconomic areas. On average, 67 percent of students in the districts are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch; more than 60 percent are Hispanic, with a high concentration having limited English proficiency. The partner districts—Boys Ranch Independent School District (ISD), Manor ISD, Richardson ISD, Lancaster ISD, Bryan ISD, Frenship ISD, and Lytle ISD will implement the TAP reform model that provides differentiated compensation based on teachers' and principals' performance and classroom and school-level student academic achievement.

Needs Assessment Results and General Information

The UT-TIF districts do not meet academic progress goals. For the past 3 years, 20 of the 27 schools selected have ratings of Academically Acceptable or Academically Unacceptable. Statewide standards for Academically Acceptable are set at 40 percent of students passing the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) math; 35 percent passing TAKS science; and 60 percent passing TAKS reading, writing, and social studies. The partner districts expect the TIF program to increase student achievement beyond these state minimums.

Teacher and principal turnover has been high historically for the partner districts. For instance, Manor ISD schools had 20 percent teacher turnover per year, and 60 percent of the faculty at Blake Manor Elementary School had less than 2 years of teaching experience.

Background

UT-TIF will implement TAP. In addition to providing differentiated compensation for teachers based on their performance in the classroom and their students' academic growth, TAP provides career advancement opportunities for teachers as they take on additional responsibilities, duties, or participate in professional development activities. The four components of TAP are: (1) multiple career paths, (2) ongoing applied professional growth, (3) instructionally focused accountability, and (4) performance-based compensation.

UT-TIF will also add an auxiliary incentive in the form of a recruitment bonus to attract effective teachers and principals to the participating schools.

Incentives

Each school in the partner districts will follow the same compensation model. Fifty percent of the incentive will be based on student achievement

Location(s)	Texas
Award Date	June 2007
Duration	5 years
Partners	Boys Ranch ISD, Manor ISD, Richardson ISD, Lancaster ISD, Bryan ISD, Frenship ISD, Lytle ISD, NIET, TAP/NIET, SAS

in the individual classroom and the entire school. The remaining part is based on classroom observations. UT-TIF creates a bonus pool of \$2,000 per teacher, with bonuses ranging from \$200 to \$5,000. Principals and assistant principals are eligible for up to \$4,000. The recruitment incentive pool will be used to provide bonuses of \$2,000 to \$4,000 to teachers and principals who have proven effective in increasing student achievement.

Evaluation

Teachers will be evaluated based on classroom and school-wide student achievement, on their performance on multiple (at least four times yearly) classroom observations, and against the TAP Teaching Skills, Knowledge, and Responsibility Performance Standards.

Overall, UT-TIF will complete at least two formal evaluations of the project: (1) a state-level evaluation based on the goals and objectives of the project and (2) a national evaluation conducted by the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET).

Resources

To promote and sustain the performance-based compensation model in Texas, the partnering districts are committed to increased financial responsibility and propose district-wide implementation, or long-term expansion of the TIF/TAP program. UT-TIF will add more than \$9 million in matching funds over the 5-year term of the grant.

Data Systems

UT-TIF will contract with William Sanders' SAS to perform all necessary value-added calculations on student achievements. The partner districts will provide SAS with teacher linkages, TAKS scores, and student demographical and historical academic achievement data.

Year 2 Activities

The TIF campuses implemented the TAP program in its entirety during Year 2 of the program. The districts distributed nearly \$200,000 in financial recruitment incentives in hard-to-staff areas. TIF campuses made significant growth in student achievement as measured by value-added scores calculated by SAS. They continued to maximize teacher quality through the professional development and support structure provided by TAP.

Outlook for Year 3

All TIF campuses are fully operational in TIF year 3. Hays CISD is no longer with the TIF program. However, its schools have been replaced by six campuses whose districts were already implementing the TAP program. All campuses that participated in the year 2 TIF grant will be eligible for performance payouts in the fall of 2009 based on their value-added data. Districts will continue to distribute financial recruitment incentives in hard-to-staff areas. TIF campuses continue to utilize the TAP program to be successful in the TIF grant.